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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/RAMCHAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2018

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: NEW HAMAS CRACKDOWN IN GAZA; AT LEAST 30 FATAH ACTIVISTS DETAINED

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Gaza Governor Muhammad al-Qidwa told PolOff by phone October 22 that Hamas security has arrested at least 30 Fatah activists in a new crackdown, apparently in response to an attempted attack on a Hamas military wing leader. Al-Qassam Brigades (the Hamas military wing) spokesmen told Palestinian press that unknown persons planted a mobile phone-activated explosive device in front of al-Qassam leader Amjad Abu al-Naja's home in Khan Yunis on October 21, but al-Qassam militiamen discovered the device and chased off the gunmen who planted it. They added that Hamas security engineers then disarmed the device without incident. Hamas spokesmen blamed "fifth columnists attempting to fan the flames of intra-Palestinian rivalry and sabotage Egyptian-led reconciliation" for the claimed assassination plot.

¶2. (C) Al-Qidwa told PolOff that Fatah was not involved in the attempted attack and questioned whether Hamas invented the incident "as a pretext to continue its campaign of jailings, harassment, and intimidation." He said there has been no allegation that any of the activists arrested were involved in the alleged plot, and said most of those detained were not in Khan Yunis when the incident took place. Al-Qidwa says Hamas security men are monitoring him and other Fatah and PLO leaders and never stopped their campaign of arbitrary arrests.

WALLES